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ABSTRACT

After two years of experimental teaching and research in suburban high schools, the Cleveland area Human Relaticns Curriculum Prcgram is being expanded to include the inner-city and elementary schccls. In an attempt to increase man's ability to get along with his fellcw man, it employs a multimedia approach including films, documentaries, news clips, novels, plays, and role playing. Each teacher is required tc participate in local university summer training institutes which includes sensitivity training, media workshops, instruction in inductive methods, and techniques for handling student response. Curriculum guides provide secondary teachers a basis for planning their course. Unit 1, "The Individual and Tclerance," attempts to get at student self-perceptions. Through various uses cf media teachers help students answer who they are, how they feel abcut themselves, and what their values are. Unit 2, "Prejudice, Justice, Poverty, and Religion," helps the student lcck at himself in relatiocn to other people and situations for a redefining of what he is and wants to be. Unit 3, "White and Black Race Issues," is a search fcr answers concerning proper values and behavior with discussion of such topics and solutions as religion, government, and family. The climax, at different times for each student, is scme variation on the theme of "What Can I Do?" Possibilities then are only limited by the group's imagination and the ccmmunity's resources. (Eight sample films are listed.) (JS)

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ED045557

A HUMAN RELATIONS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

CREATED BY THE PACE ASSOCIATION

518 The Arcade
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(A PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT CITIZENS' ORGANIZATION
CONCERNED WITH QUALITY EDUCATION IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY)

INTRODUCTION:

In the summer of 1967, a group of high school teachers from the Greater Cleveland area was asked by PACE to consider how human relations might be taught in public school systems. From their deliberations grew a "Human Relations Curriculum Project" which they agreed to teach experimentally in their respective schools that fall. The curriculum was to be taught at the secondary level primarily in suburban school systems.

Two years of teaching and research in the project provided data that indicated that the program should be expanded. The enthusiasm with which the suburban schools received the program suggested that the project might also be attempted in Cleveland and that elementary schools, as well as secondary, should be involved. With the aid of a Ford Foundation Grant and Title III money, the project was enlarged in the summer of 1969 to include three phases: Phase I, Suburban; Phase II, Inner-City; Phase III, Elementary. It now involves 84 teachers in 63 elementary and secondary schools in 17 school districts throughout Cuyahoga County. The project obviously is gaining wider and wider acceptance!

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WHAT IT IS:

The Human Relations Curriculum is an attempt to increase man's ability to get along with his fellow man. It involves both teachers and students in an exciting process of self-discovery and analysis. By employing a multi-media approach, including films, documentaries, newsclips, novels, plays, role-playing and other instructional techniques, the curriculum tries to produce tolerant individuals who are aware of their own modes of behavior and sensitive in their relationships with others. The teaching method depends, to a great extent, on inductive reasoning where students draw their own conclusions and establish their own value systems. Thus, they are not taught human relations, but are led in a process of personal growth.

Each teacher who "teaches" the curriculum is required to participate in summer training institutes held at local universities. These training sessions are so designed that the teachers experience much of what their students will subsequently experience in class.

The institutes include sensitivity training, media workshops, instruction in inductive methods of teaching and techniques for handling student response.. Even though no set curriculum is prescribed for use by the teachers, each is encouraged to explore possible approaches to what he will do in class and then asked to present the type of course which he will offer in the fall.

In the summer of 1968, curriculum guides were developed for secondary school teachers so that they would have a written basis for planning their course of study. At the end of the 1969 school year, it is anticipated that elementary teachers, as well as the inner-city high school teachers will have similar guides.

During the school year, all teachers receive consultive help in the classroom, and in-service training, designed to clarify and improve upon what they are doing. In 1969-70, the staff, which provides consultation, is working with the teachers to devise curriculum guides at the elementary level and to update the guides which are currently being used in the secondary schools.

WHAT HAPPENS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSES - AN OPINION

By Ron Harding
(Former Human Relations Teacher)

Even though there is much variety in teaching method and approach, there are certain things which in general are or should be happening in every human relations class. If teachers follow the curriculum guides, their classes should approximate the following format: Unit I, entitled "The Individual and Tolerance", attempts to get at student self-perceptions. It starts where the students are, recognizing each as a unique human being, focusing, not so much on his physical environment, as on his emotional, intellectual and behavioral characteristics (including values, temperament, awareness, etc.). Through various uses of media,

teachers help students answer who they are, how they feel about themselves and what their values are. The teacher's job is to point up self-perceptions and assist students in understanding them.

In the process of self-discovery, the teacher's role is crucial! He must foster an atmosphere of free expression in the classroom and be sensitive to the class moods. He is aware of the general themes involved in shaping human relations (including love, war, poverty, government, religion, crime, sex, school, family, race, etc.) and knows when these are ready to emerge in the course of the class discussion.

Throughout Unit I, the ideal teacher guards against the temptation to make judgments about student ideas and values. He contributes ideas and observations only as a means of helping students progress in the process of self-discovery. Since the success of this first unit is curcial to the completion of the course goals, it is usually the longest and most intense.

Once the student's self-image, with its intrinsic value system, is brought, at least partially, into focus, the teacher then moves on to Unit II, "Prejudice, Justice, Poverty, and Religion." By use of media, again the student is asked to look at himself in relation to other people and situations. For the first time, he is encouraged to look at the logic and consistency of the values and attitudes which he recognized in Unit I. This is the point at which he begins to redefine what he is and wants to be.

Redefinition may occur as the student discovers that he does not like what he sees about himself. If, for example, he sees that he is highly structured, authoritarian person, he may feel that his behavior is detrimental to the growth and well being of others. By having classroom experiences which help him understand how he affects others, or how other people affect him, the student is led to reflect on his values and perhaps to realize the need for change. He is learning at this point how to empathize and, as a result, is growing in self-awareness.

When Unit III, "White and Black Race Issues," begins, there may be some students in class who feel that they have answers concerning proper values and behavior in today's society. If such is the case, students are encouraged to present their solutions in class along with their suggested methods of implementation. One of the major insights which can come from this unit, is an awareness of the intolerance which persons who think they have the answers, tend to generate. People on the left, as well as the right, may express this behavior. If students have been properly sensitized through class participation, they should be able to recognize such dogmatism and begin to deal with it.

At this point, the students discuss such topics and solutions as religion, from the most structured to the most amorphous; government, from dictatorship to anarchy; and perhaps philosophies on child raising, marriage, education, economic systems and genetics. The teacher provides strength and continuity to these topics by acting as a catalytic agent and experience coordinator. Throughout this unit, the process of exploring and developing values is continued.

The climax of the course comes at different times for each student, but it always sounds about the same to the teacher; some variation on the theme of "What can I do?" This desire can be translated in many different ways. First of all, the school itself may involve the students in planning a model school and exploring its feasibility. Some students might formulate a plan of action for their church, school, or local real estate agency. For some members of the class, getting involved in local elections or politics might be a chosen activity. Others, who do not want to approach problems in this way, but do want to be of service to people, may set up student volunteer programs. The possibilities here are only limited by the group's imagination and the community's resources.

The course really has no stopping point. The school term probably will end right in the middle of a lot of unfinished thoughts and activities. Hopefully, the classroom experience will have provided a springboard for active, aware, and socially conscious individuals who will maintain open-mindedness in a changing society.

SAMPLES OF FILMS USED IN THE COURSE

Nobody Waved Goodby

Motivates the student to look at his life and state his values while discussing what happens to a person who tries to lead an unexamined life.

The Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner

This movie prods the viewer to make sense out of the actions of an anti-hero and thereby come to grips with his own values and directions in life.

The Incident

The movie causes the student to question his own detachment from society and encourages discussion around ideas of commitment.

Lord of the Flies

This classic stimulates thinking about the nature of man and the effects of different kinds of teaching and learning on behavior.

Savage Innocents

Portrays the conflicts which arise from cultural biases. It is also used to generate discussions about primary human values vs. cultural values, and law and order.

12 Angry Men

The movie raises questions about justice, judgment and majority rule. Students are urged to question some basic assumptions of their own after seeing the ease with which groups can affect opinion.

The Captive

Elicits statements about poverty stricken individuals and generally leads to confrontation as to the causes and solutions of the problem.

Nothing But a Man

Leads students to confront their own attitudes about Black Americans. The film lends itself to a discussion of the different attitudes Blacks have about themselves and how Blacks may react to white racism.